

Message Text

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PAGE 01 COLOMB 01412 221023Z

ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7157

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E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: PINT, PINS, CE

SUBJ: POLICE EXPRESS CONCERN OVER EX-INSURGENT ACTIVITIES

REF: (A) COLOMBO 1315; (B) COLOMBO 703

1. SUMMARY: FOUR ORGANIZATIONS OF EX-INSURGENTS ARE BEING WATCHED BY SECURITY FORCES BECAUSE OF "INFLAMMATORY" STATEMENTS THEY ARE REPORTED TO HAVE MADE. POLICE SOURCES HAVE ADMITTED, HOWEVER, THAT THE LINK OFTEN SUSPECTED BETWEEN CRIME WAVES AND RELEASED INSURGENTS IS EXAGGERATED. END SUMMARY.

2. FOUR REVOLUTIONARY POLITICAL GROUPS LED BY PERSONS IMPLICATED IN THE APRIL 1971 INSURRECTION ARE NOW UNDER POLICE SURVEILLANCE, ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS BASED ON POLICE BRIEFINGS. THE FOUR POLITICAL GROUPS ARE:

A. JANATHA VIMUKTHI PERAMUNA (JVP) WHICH LAUNCHED THE 1971 INSURRECTION,

B. MAHAJANA VIMUKTHI PAKSHAYA (MVP) A POLITICAL PARTY FORMED IN 1977, AND LED BY MAHINDA WIJESEKERA,

C. MATHRU BHUMI ARAKSHAKA SANGAMAYA LED BY G.I.D. ("CASTRO") DHARMASEKERA, AND

D. PERADIGA SULANG KALLIYA LED BY GAMINI YAPA.

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PAGE 02 COLOMB 01412 221023Z

THESE PRESS REPORTS FOLLOW THE PM'S CONVERSATION WITH J.R. JAYEWARDENE ON THE SAME SUBJECT (REF A).

3. THE POLICE HAVE SAID THAT THE FOUR GROUPS ARE BEING WATCHED BECAUSE OF INFLAMMATORY STATEMENTS WHICH HAVE BEEN MADE AT PUBLIC MEETINGS AND PUBLISHED IN THE OCCASIONAL NEWS SHEETS OF THESE ORGANIZATIONS. THE POLICE ADDED THAT THERE IS NO

EVIDENCE TO SUGGEST THAT THERE IS AN ORGANIZED CRIME CAMPAIGN BY THE EX-INSURGENTS AS HAS BEEN IMPLIED IN SOME PRESS REPORTS. ONLY THREE MAJOR ROBBERIES (ALL IN THE NORTH CENTRAL AND CENTRAL PROVINCES) COMMITTED WITHIN THE PAST YEAR HAVE BEEN TRACED TO VETERANS OF THE 1971 INSURGENCY.

4. OF THE FOUR GROUPS LISTED, THE JVP IS THE MOST PROMINENT. IT HAS BEEN QUICK TO DENY THAT IT IS ENGAGED IN ROBBERIES OR OTHER CRIMINAL ACTIVITY; ITS PUBLIC MEETINGS HAVE BEEN MARKED BY ANTI-GOVERNMENT RHETORIC BUT THERE HAS BEEN NOTHING APPROACHING A CALL TO ARMS OF WHICH WE ARE AWARE. THE SMALLER MVP AND MATHRU BHUMI ARAKSHAKA SANGAMAYA ARE BOTH ENGAGED IN OVERT POLITICAL ORGANIZING AND WOULD LIKE TO JOIN THE EMBRYONIC SOCIALIST UNITED FRONT; THEY ARE SAID TO BE OPPOSED IN THAT AIM BY THE LSSP. THE PERADIGA SULANG KALLIYA WAS A SURROGATE FOR THE JVP, WHEN THE JVP WAS BANNED AFTER THE 1971 INSURGENCY. THE PSK ITSELF WAS THEN PROSCRIBED IN NOVEMBER 1974 AND, LIKE THE JVP, HAS BEEN FREE TO ENGAGE IN POLITICS AGAIN ONLY SINCE THE LAPSE OF THE EMERGENCY IN FEBRUARY 1977.

5. THE COMMUNIST PARTY NEWSPAPER, ATTHA HAS CLITICIZED THE GOVERNMENT'S STATEMENTS CONCERNING INSURGENTS AND IMPLIED THAT THEY ARE A CAMPAIGN STUNT INTENDED ULTIMATELY TO REPRESS THE RADICAL YOUTH. THE PAPER ALSO ASKED WHY THE CP AND THE LSSP WERE NOT NOTIFIED OF THE INSURGENT DANGERS AT THE SAME TIME AS J.R. (J.R. HAS SINCE DENIED THAT HE RECEIVED A FULL BRIEFING FROM THE P.M., SAYING THAT IT WAS MORE IN THE NATURE OF AN OFF-HAND COMMENT AT A MEETING ON ANOTHER SUBJECT.)

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PAGE 03 COLOMB 01412 221023Z

6. COMMENT: SOME OF THE "INSPIRED" PUBLICITY OF RECENT WEEKS DOES SEEM TO HAVE THE AIM OF DISCREDITING THE NEW INSURGENT-LINKED ORGANIZATIONS, WHICH ARE PROVING A THORN IN THE SIDE OF THE ESTABLISHED POLITICAL PARTIES. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE POLICE REBUTTAL OF THE WIDESPREAD BELIEF THAT NEO-INSURGENTS ARE BEHIND EVERY MUGGING AND ROBBERY BEARS OUT OUR VIEW THAT THERE IS CURRENTLY NO ORGANIZED CAMPAIGN OF DISRUPTION AND THAT THE LAPSE OF THE EMERGENCY AND RELEASE OF SOME INSURGENTS HAVE POSED NO IMMEDIATE SECURITY THREAT TO SRI LANKA.
REED

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Sent Date: 22-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
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